

Arabia Deserta. A Topographical Itinerary by Alois Musil, Professor of Oriental Studies Charles University, Prague. Published under the Patronage of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts and of Charles R. Crane, New York, 1927. pp. 631. With special maps in folder. American Geographical Society, New York. Price \$8.00.

The author is well known for his researches in Oriental geography, history, archeology and ethnology. His book on the Northern Hedjaz, published in 1926, is followed by this volume on Northern and Western Arabia, and we are promised three other works on Arabian geography, namely, "The Middle Euphrates," "Palmyrena" and "Northern Nejj." In 1896-1902 the author explored Arabia Deserta. To fill in the gaps he made a second journey in 1912 and again in 1914. He says, "The primary motive of my explorations was historical, not cartographical; therefore I tried to collect as many topographical names as possible as a basis for historical researches, and in so doing I paid especial attention to the spelling."

In regard to the transliteration of Arabic words we have a criticism to offer later. The contents of the book fall into three parts, followed by eight valuable appendices. In the first part he describes his earliest expedition from Damascus to Al-Mijâdîn, to Harâbi on to Wadi Sirhan and al Gowf and the Nefud. The second part is a brief account of his journey to Nejj in 1912, and the third part describes a second visit to al Gowf 1914-1915. In the appendices we have invaluable geographical and historical studies on the following subjects: Northern Arabia in the Assyrian Period, The Bene Kedom, Arabia Deserta according to Classical Authors, The Boundaries of Arabia Deserta according to the Arabic Authors, Ancient Transport Routes in Arabia Deserta, Medieval and Modern Routes in Arabia Deserta, Pages from the History of the Oasis of Dumat Al-Gandal, The March of Haled Ibn Al-Walid from Iraq to Syria.

An extensive bibliography, including classical and Arabian writers, together with an exhaustive index complete the volume. Although published in New York, the whole work, including the excellent maps, was printed at Prague, and the execution is of the best. No student of present-day Arabia and of its ancient geography can dispense with this important contribution on the subject. The book contains pictures of Arab life and thought that remind one of Burton and Doughty. The narrative is delightfully personal. Professor Alois Musil loves the Arab and understands him. Here is the picture at the outset of his journey: "For the past ten days an-Nuri had been going about strongly armed. Besides a dagger and an eight-barreled Gasser revolver with forty-eight rounds of ammunition, he carried 120 Mannlicher sharp cartridges and a carbine. Wondering at this array I asked him the reason and received this reply: 'Brother, it's our habit. We are at war with many a tribe and know not when we may be attacked. I myself must be doubly careful and alert, for I know not when or where the avenger may surprise me. I never sleep alone at night; yet it is for the good of my family, nay, of the whole tribe, that I did what I did.' This he said in allusion to his brother and predecessor, Prince Fahad, who had been murdered by a slave at an-Nuri's own order, and to another brother, Misal, whom he had killed with his own hand. He boasted of having personally killed in fights over one hundred and

twenty men; and yet there he was sitting before me and looking at me with his childlike, sincere eyes!"

Like all Arabian travellers the author speaks of the hardships of the desert, he describes the utter lack of sanitation in the Bedouin camps, the hunger and thirst of their long marches and the extreme cold of the Arabian plateau: "Tuesday, November 17, 1908. At night the thermometer registered a minimum of six degrees below zero (centigrade). I could hardly believe it, but the ice that formed upon the water bags vindicated the truthfulness of the instrument. The first thing on the morning I left, with Tumân, for the Roman camp, where we worked for over three hours under difficulties, for a violent icy, northwest wind kept bending the tape measure and making our hands and fingers numb."

There are some interesting references to present-day religious conditions in Northern Arabia. "I was surprised to find that so many of the Rwala had been converted to Islam since the year 1909. In 1908 and 1909 I had not seen a single Rwejlî (*sic*) pray, but in the year 1914 it was different. I think that it was the result of Nawwaf's activity, for, having captured al-Gowf and other settlements, he was obliged to recite prayers with the fanatical settlers. His soldiers, hailing from the villages by the middle Euphrates and from al-Kasim, were accustomed to prayer, and many of them could recite an entire chapter from the Koran, teaching others and exhorting them to the observance of religious precepts. The soldiers from al-Kasim, like the settlers from al-Gowf, were pervaded with the ideas of the Wahhâbites; hence Nawwaf had no alternative but to join them and uphold, outwardly at least, the Wahhâbite teachings. Therefore al-Hatîb (the conductor of prayers) loudly ordered his soldiers to recitation of the prescribed prayers and prayed with them. Prayers were said near an-Nuri's tent also, but invariably in the evening, as the Bedouins slept long after sunrise; but they occasionally prayed in the afternoon. Many a Bedouin followed the example of the chiefs and prayed also. He would imitate all their motions but did not repeat the prayers, for he did not know them. This I learned by asking many men in vain to repeat the prayers. What amazed me most in the Rwala was their increasing hatred of the Christians (*nasâra*) in general and the *Inkliz* (English) in particular. This had resulted from the wars of the Turkish Government with Italy and the Balkan States."

We have two criticisms to offer. The transliteration of Arabic is meticulous, but quite impossible. We give an example from which the reader may judge: "When thou art on a journey through the inner desert, be thou on the lookout at all times of the day, but in the night keepest thou silence (*bilejl skât wa bnahâr iltifat*)!"

Our second criticism is that Prof. Musil makes scant reference to the great travellers who have preceded him in exploring the same area and made it famous by their books. We looked in vain for any reference to Charles M. Doughty in the text or the bibliography, finally we found a little foot-note in the preface speaking of "his noble volumes, 'Travels in Arabia Deserta' (2 vols., Cambridge 1888, reprinted 1920, 1923) in which he describes journeyings in a region which was actually the Arabia Felix of the ancient authors. Though his title is apt from the descriptive point of view, it is misleading when regarded in the light of ancient geography."

Why should Hamlet be left out in this fashion? The same is true regarding the work of Charles Huber. It is, to say the least, ungracious to dismiss in a dozen words the work of the great French explorer whose "Journal d'un Voyage in Arabia" (1883-1884) with a score of maps, and 780 pages of text is packed with geographical and archeological information.

S. M. Z.

Le Credenze religiose di Maometto: loro Origine e Rapporti con la Tradizione Giudaico-Cristiana, di Prof. Giuseppe Sacco. Roma, Francesco Ferrari (Via dei Cestari No. 2). 8vo. xlvii, 190 pp.

This volume represents the most complete attempt to set forth in systematic form what one might call the Theology of the Koran, that has appeared since the second part of Grimme's "Mohammed" which was published in 1894. Even so it is far from complete, but is a readable and suggestive treatise as far as it goes.

The author is of the School of Caetani and Lammens, and his discussion unfortunately is frequently marred by something of the harshness and bitterness which is so characteristic of the latter scholar. Sacco is perfectly convinced that Islam is hardly worth calling a religion, and that Mohammed was little more than a scheming sensualist who adopted religion as the way to attain his ends, and he states his convictions in no uncertain terms.

In the Introduction he gives a brief sketch of the life of Mohammed as he appears in the light that modern scholarship has been able to throw upon the *Sira*, and an account of the formation and general character of the Koran. Then in his Conclusion, he discusses how far Islam may be considered a religion, the reason for the wide divergence of later Islam from the doctrine of the Koran, and some discussion of the causes of its wide expansion.

The body of the work, however, is his systematization of the teaching of the Koran in the form we are used to in text books on the Theology of the Old or New Testament, with some discussion as he proceeds of the influence of Judaism and Christianity on the various doctrines set forth. He begins naturally with the doctrine of Allah, his nature and attributes and the Koranic discussion of the Trinity and of Christ. This is followed by the Angelology and Demonology of the Koran, which leads up to its account of Creation and its doctrine of man. This leads naturally to a discussion of Predestination and the Divine Economy, and the final chapters are devoted to Eschatology.

Prof. Sacco, unfortunately, has not kept abreast of the literature of the subject, so that frequently his discussion on individual points is antiquated. Also in dealing with Jewish and Christian influences, though he frequently refers to the Latin version of Apocryphal works, he seems to lack that close acquaintance with the Syriac, Ethiopic and Jewish Aramaic writings which is essential to any fruitful discussion of this complicated problem. On the whole, however, it is a good and useful book, which merits the attention of all students interested in the Koran or in the teaching of Mohammed.

ARTHUR JEFFERY.